

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE**  
***U.S. EMBASSY KINSHASA***  
**Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)**

**Program Office:** Public Diplomacy Section (PDS)

**Funding Opportunity Title:** Congo Basin Conclave

**Announcement Type:** Cooperative Agreement

**Funding Opportunity Number:** DOS-AF-DRC-PDS-FY23-03

**Deadline for Applications:** May 22, 2023

**Assistance Listing Number:** 19.040 -- Public Diplomacy Programs (Smith-Mundt)

**Total Amount Available:** \$200,000-\$250,000, pending funding availability.

**A. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

The U.S. Embassy in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo, of the U.S. Department of State, announces an open competition for organizations to submit applications to organize and handle logistics for a regional conclave bringing together stakeholders working to preserve the Congo Basin and support economic opportunities for local communities.

**Priority Region:** Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo  
Brazzaville, Republic of Congo  
Yaoundé, Cameroon  
Libreville, Gabon  
Malabo, Equatorial Guinea

**Program Objectives:**

**Background**

Known as the “world’s second lung,” the Congo Basin, at over 500 million acres, stands as the world’s second-largest tropical forest. Its trees soak up some 1.2 billion tons of carbon dioxide each year and harbor 30 billion metric tons of carbon – the equivalent of three years’ worth of the world’s total fossil fuel emissions, or 20 years of greenhouse emissions from the United States. The Congo rainforest is known for its extraordinary biodiversity, including millions of different endemic species. It is home to more than 75 million people from over 150 distinct ethnic groups.

The Congo Basin and its people are increasingly under threat. Slash and burn agriculture, urbanization, rapid population growth, charcoal production, deforestation, illegal logging and mining, the bushmeat trade, and climate change all contribute to environmental degradation. The Congo Basin Conclave seeks to bring together local stakeholders to share their experiences and build networks that support projects that invest in the people of the Congo Basin, balancing economic opportunities for local communities and protections for indigenous peoples and the environment.

## **Concept**

- Phase one of the project will start with country-specific sessions for U.S. government-selected participants (including Embassy contacts, alumni, civil society leaders, and academics) in Brazzaville, Kinshasa, Libreville, Malabo, and Yaoundé. Attendees will evaluate what they want to bring to and get from the regional conclave (phase two) and brainstorm ideas for regional cooperation and/or exchanges to present at the regional conclave.
- During phase two of the project, a maximum of 50 participants from the five country-specific sessions will gather in Kinshasa, DRC, for a 1-2 day Congo Basin Conclave (and evening reception). The event will be divided between sessions of general interest and breakout sessions on core themes, where participants will discuss their experiences, share best practices, and develop ideas for regional projects to propose for Embassy funding. All sessions will be in English and French (consecutive interpretation).
- A cultural component will communicate the value of traditional arts and practices, underscoring the cultural connections between Congo Basin communities and providing a platform for local artists to add their voices to the conversation.

## **Objectives**

- The Congo Basin Conclave will provide a forum that enables experts and stakeholders to network across borders, share best practices, and promote local solutions to local problems.
- As a result of the conclave, participants will conceive and propose projects for U.S. government funding that invest in the people of the Congo Basin, balancing economic opportunity for local communities and protections for indigenous peoples with environmental concerns.

## **Participants and Audiences**

Residents of the Congo Basin working to improve local conditions, including Embassy contacts, alumni of U.S. government programs, civil society leaders, and academics.

## **B. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION**

**Length of performance period:** 12 months

**Number of awards anticipated:** 1 award (dependent on amounts)

**Award amounts:** awards may range from a minimum of \$200,000 to a maximum of \$250,000

**Total available funding:** \$250,000, pending funding availability

**Type of Funding:** FY23 – Smith-Mundt Public Diplomacy Funds

**Anticipated program start date:** Summer 2023 for phase one; Fall 2023 for phase two

**This notice is subject to availability of funding.**

**Funding Instrument Type:** Cooperative agreement. The U.S. government will select participants, speakers, and themes for Conclave sessions.

**Program Performance Period:** Proposed programs should be completed in one year or less.

### **C. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION**

1. **Eligible Applicants:** The Public Diplomacy Section encourages applications from the U.S. and the Democratic Republic of the Congo:
  - Registered not-for-profit organizations, including think tanks and civil society/nongovernmental organizations with programming experience
  - Individuals
  - Non-profit educational institutions
  - Governmental institutions
  - For-profit or commercial entities are not eligible to apply.
2. **Cost Sharing or Matching:** Not required.
3. **Other Eligibility Requirements:** Applicants are only allowed to submit one proposal per organization per deadline. If more than one proposal is submitted from an organization, all proposals from that institution will be considered ineligible for funding. In order to be eligible to receive an award, all organizations must have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number issued via [www.SAM.gov](http://www.SAM.gov) as well as a valid registration on [www.SAM.gov](http://www.SAM.gov). Please see Section D.3 for information on how to obtain these registrations. Individuals are not required to have a UEI or be registered in SAM.gov.

**D. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION:** Please follow all instructions below carefully. Proposals that do not meet the requirements of this announcement or fail to comply with the stated requirements will be ineligible. Applications must include all the information listed in the U.S. Embassy grant proposal template (DOC 85 KB).

1. **Content of Application:** Please ensure:

- The proposal clearly addresses the goals and objectives of this funding opportunity and how they relate to the Embassy strategic goals stated in this NOFO?
  - All documents are in English.
  - All budgets are in U.S. Dollars.
  - All pages are numbered.
  - All documents are formatted to A4 or 8 ½ x 11-inch paper.
  - All Microsoft Word documents are single-spaced, 12 point Calibri font, with a minimum of 1-inch margins.
- a. **Mandatory Forms:** The following documents are required (application forms required below are available on the [U.S. Embassy Kinshasa website](#) or on [Grants.gov](#)):
- SF-424 (Application for Federal Assistance – organizations) or SF-424-I (Application for Federal Assistance --individuals)
  - SF424A (Budget Information for Non-Construction programs)
  - SF424B (Assurances for Non-Construction programs) – required for individuals and for organizations not registered in SAM.gov.
- b. **Summary Coversheet:** Cover sheet stating the applicant’s name and organization, proposal date, program title, program period proposed start and end date, and brief purpose of the program.
- c. **Proposal (three-page maximum):** The proposal should contain sufficient information that anyone not familiar with it would understand exactly what the applicant wants to do. You may use your own proposal format, but it must include all the items below.
- **Proposal Summary:** Short narrative that outlines the proposed program, including program objectives, anticipated impact, and target audience.
  - **Introduction to the Organization or Individual applying:** A succinct description of past and present operations, demonstrating ability to carry out the program, including information on all previous grants from the U.S. Embassy and/or U.S. government agencies.
  - **Problem Statement:** Clear, concise, and well-supported statement of the problem to be addressed and why the proposed program is needed.
  - **Program Goals and Objectives:** The “goals” describe what the program is intended to achieve. What aspect of the relationship between the U.S. and the Democratic Republic of the Congo will be supported? The “objectives” refer to the intermediate accomplishments on the way to the goals. These should be achievable and measurable.

- **Program Activities:** Describe the program activities and how they will help achieve the objectives.
  - **Program Methods and Design:** A description of how the program is expected to work to solve the stated problem and achieve the goal.
  - **Proposed Program Schedule:** The proposed timeline for the program activities. Include the dates, times, and locations of planned activities and events.
  - **Key Personnel:** Names, titles, roles, and experience/qualifications of key personnel involved in the program. What proportion of their time will be used in support of this program?
  - **Program Partners:** List the names and type of involvement of key partner organizations and sub-awardees.
  - **Program Monitoring and Evaluation Plan:** This is an important part of successful grants. Throughout the timeframe of the grant, how will the activities be monitored to ensure they are happening in a timely manner, and how will the program be evaluated to make sure it is meeting the goals of the grant?
  - **Future Funding or Sustainability:** Applicant's plan for continuing the program beyond the grant period, or the availability of other resources, if applicable.
- d. **Budget Justification Narrative:** After filling out the SF-424A Budget (above), use separate sheet of paper to describe each of the budget expenses in detail. See section H. Other Information: Guidelines for Budget Submissions below for further information.
- e. **Attachments:**
- 1-page CV or resume of key personnel who are proposed for the program
  - Letters of support from program partners describing the roles and responsibilities of each partner
  - Official permission letters, if required for program activities
  - Documentation of non-profit or non-commercial status

## 2. Required Registrations:

- All organizations applying for grants (except individuals) must obtain a SAM registration which will generate a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI).
- Any applicant with an exclusion in the System for Award Management (SAM) is not eligible to apply for an assistance award in accordance with the OMB guidelines at 2 CFR 180 that implement Executive Orders 12549 (3 CFR, 1986 Comp., p. 189) and 12689 (3 CFR, 1989 Comp., p. 235), "Debarment and Suspension."
- The Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) is one of the data elements mandated by Public Law 109-282, the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA), for all Federal awards. SAM.gov is the Federal government's primary database for complying with FFATA reporting requirements. OMB designated SAM.gov as the central repository to facilitate applicant and recipient use of a

single public website that consolidates data on all federal financial assistance. Under the law, it is mandatory to register in SAM.gov.

- Starting April 2022, the UEI will be assigned when an organization registers or renews its registration in SAM.gov at [www.SAM.gov](http://www.SAM.gov). To access SAM.gov an organization is required to have a Login.gov account. Organization can create an account at <https://login.gov/>. As a reminder, organizations need to renew its sam.gov registration annually. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure it has an active registration in SAM.gov.
- If an organization plans to issue a sub-contract or sub-award, those sub-awardees must also have a unique entity identifier (UEI number). Those entities can register for a UEI only at SAM.gov.
- If an organization does not have an active registration in SAM.gov prior to submitting an application, the application will be deemed ineligible. All organizations applying for grants (except individuals) must obtain these registrations, the latter are free of charge.
- Organizations based outside of the United States and that do not pay employees within the United States do not need an EIN from the IRS, but do need a UEI number prior to registering in SAM.gov. Please note that as of December 2022, organizations based outside of the United States that do not intend to apply for U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) awards are no longer required to have a NATO CAGE (NCAGE) code to apply for non-DoD foreign assistance funding opportunities. If an applicant organization is mid-registration and wishes to remove an NCAGE code from their sam.gov registration, the applicant should submit a help desk ticket ("incident") with the Federal Service Desk (FSD) online at [www.fsd.gov](http://www.fsd.gov) to seek guidance on how to do so.
- All prime organizations must also continue to maintain active SAM.gov registration with current information at all times during which they have an active Federal award or application under consideration by a Federal award agency. SAM.gov requires all entities to renew their registration once a year in order to maintain an active registration status in SAM.
- It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure it has an active registration in SAM.gov and to maintain that active registration. If an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements at the time of application, the applicant may be deemed technically ineligible to receive an award and use that determination as a basis for making an award to another applicant. Please refer to 2 CFR 25.200 for additional information.
- Note: SAM.gov is not the same as SAMS Domestic. It is free of charge to register in both systems, but the registration processes are different.
- Information is included on the SAM.gov website to help international registrations. Navigate to [www.SAM.gov](http://www.SAM.gov), click "HELP" in the top navigation bar, then click, "Explore" and "New to SAM.gov?" for general information. Please note, guidance on SAM.gov and the guidance on GSA's website is being updated

to reflect the change in NCAGE requirement. Applicants should review the website frequently for the most up-to-date guidance.

- Exemptions – An exemption from these requirements may be permitted on a case-by-case basis if:
    - o An applicant’s identity must be protected due to potential endangerment of their mission, their organization’s status, their employees, or individuals being served by the applicant.
    - o For an applicant, if the Federal awarding agency makes a determination that there are exigent circumstances that prohibit the applicant from receiving a unique entity identifier and completing SAM registration prior to receiving a Federal award. In these instances, Federal awarding agencies must require the recipient to obtain a unique entity identifier and complete SAM registration within 30 days of the Federal award date.
  - Organizations requesting exemption from UEI or SAM.gov requirements must email the point of contact listed in the NOFO at least two weeks prior to the deadline in the NOFO providing a justification of their request. Approval for a SAM.gov exemption must come from the warranted Grants Officer before the application can be deemed eligible for review.
4. **Submission Dates and Times:** PD Kinshasa will accept proposals until May 15, 2023, and will review proposals on a bi-monthly basis.
5. **Funding Restrictions:** N/A
6. **Other Submission Requirements:** All application materials must be submitted by email to [KinshasaPDGrants@state.gov](mailto:KinshasaPDGrants@state.gov).

## E. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

1. **Criteria:** Each application will be evaluated and rated based on the criteria outlined below. The criteria listed are closely related and are considered in judging the overall quality of an application:
- **Organizational capacity and record on previous grants (25 points):** The organization has expertise in its stated field and PD is confident of its ability to undertake the program. This includes a financial management system and a bank account.
  - **Quality and Feasibility of the Program Idea (25 points):** The program idea is well developed, with detail about how program activities will be carried out. The proposal includes a reasonable implementation timeline.
  - **Program Planning/Ability to Achieve Objectives (15 points):** Goals and objectives are clearly stated and program approach is likely to provide maximum

impact in achieving the proposed results. Applicant has clearly described how stated goals are related to and support U.S. Embassy Kinshasa's priority themes with target audiences.

- **Budget (15 points):** The budget justification is detailed. Costs are reasonable in relation to the proposed activities and anticipated results. The budget is realistic, accounting for all necessary expenses to achieve proposed activities.
  - **Monitoring and evaluation plan (15 points):** Applicant demonstrates an ability to measure program success against key indicators and provide milestones to indicate progress toward goals outlined in the proposal. The program includes output and outcome indicators and shows how and when those will be measured.
  - **Sustainability (5 points):** Program activities will continue to have positive impact after the end of the program.
2. **Review and Selection Process:** An Embassy Grants Review Committee will evaluate all eligible applications monthly. Successful applicants will be notified in writing.
  3. **Responsibility/Qualification Information in SAM.gov (formerly FAPIIS):** The U.S. Embassy in Kinshasa is required to review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM (currently FAPIIS) (see 41 U.S.C. 2313). An applicant, at its option, may review information in the designated integrity and performance systems accessible through SAM and comment on any information about itself that a U.S. government awarding agency previously entered and is currently in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM. The U.S. Embassy in Kinshasa will consider any comments by the applicant, in addition to the other information in the designated integrity and performance system, in making a judgment about the applicant's integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under federal awards when completing the review of risk posed by applicants as described in §200.205 Federal awarding agency review of risk posed by applicants.
  4. **Anticipated Announcement and Federal Award Dates:** Proposals will be reviewed monthly and successful applicants will be informed within 4 weeks of submission.

## **F. FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION**

1. **Federal Award Notices:** The grant award or cooperative agreement will be written, signed, awarded, and administered by the Grants Officer. The assistance award agreement is the authorizing document and it will be provided to the recipient for review and signature by email. The recipient may only start incurring program expenses beginning on the start date shown on the grant award document signed by the Grants Officer. If a proposal is selected for funding, the Department of State has no obligation



to provide any additional future funding. Renewal of an award to increase funding or extend the period of performance is at the discretion of the Department of State.

- a. Issuance of this Notice of Funding Opportunity does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the U.S. government, nor does it commit the U.S. government to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of proposals. Further, the U.S. government reserves the right to reject any or all proposals received.
  - b. Payment Method: Payments will be made in at least two installments, as needed to carry out the program activities. The U.S. Embassy in Kinshasa reserves the right to amend the final amount to be reimbursed after reviewing the final progress and financial reports. Organizations whose applications will not be funded will also be notified via email.
2. **Administrative and National Policy Requirements:** Before submitting an application, applicants should review all the terms and conditions and required certifications which will apply to this award, to ensure that they will be able to comply. These include:
- [2 CFR 25 - UNIVERSAL IDENTIFIER AND SYSTEM FOR AWARD MANAGEMENT](#)
  - [2 CFR 170 - REPORTING SUBAWARD AND EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION INFORMATION](#)
  - [2 CFR 175 - AWARD TERM FOR TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS](#)
  - [2 CFR 182 - GOVERNMENTWIDE REQUIREMENTS FOR DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE \(FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE\)](#)
  - [2 CFR 183 - NEVER CONTRACT WITH THE ENEMY](#)
  - [2 CFR 600 – DEPARTMENT OF STATE REQUIREMENTS](#)
  - [U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE STANDARD TERMS AND CONDITIONS](#)

In accordance with the Office of Management and Budget's guidance located at 2 CFR part 200, all applicable Federal laws, and relevant Executive guidance, the Department of State will review and consider applications for funding, as applicable to specific programs, pursuant to this notice of funding opportunity in accordance with the following: NOTE:

- President's September 2, 2020 memorandum, entitled Memorandum on Reviewing Funding to State and Local Government Recipients of Federal Funds that Are Permitting Anarchy, Violence, and Destruction in American Cities;
- Executive Order on Protecting American Monuments, Memorials, and Statues and Combating Recent Criminal Violence (E.O. 13933); and
- [Guidance for Grants and Agreements in Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations](#) (2 CFR), as updated in the Federal Register's 85 FR 49506 on August 13, 2020, particularly on:

- Selecting recipients most likely to be successful in delivering results based on the program objectives through an objective process of evaluating Federal award applications (2 CFR part 200.205),
  - Prohibiting the purchase of certain telecommunication and video surveillance services or equipment in alignment with section 889 of the National Defense Authorization Act of 2019 (Pub. L. No. 115—232) (2 CFR part 200.216),
  - Promoting the freedom of speech and religious liberty in alignment with Promoting Free Speech and Religious Liberty (E.O. 13798) and Improving Free Inquiry, Transparency, and Accountability at Colleges and Universities (E.O. 13864) (§§ 200.300, 200.303, 200.339, and 200.341),
  - Providing a preference, to the extent permitted by law, to maximize use of goods, products, and materials produced in the United States (2 CFR part 200.322), and
  - Terminating agreements in whole or in part to the greatest extent authorized by law, if an award no longer effectuates the program goals or agency priorities (2 CFR part 200.340).
- Note the U.S Flag branding and marking requirements in the Standard Terms and Conditions.
3. **Reporting Requirements:** Recipients will be required to submit financial reports and program reports. The award document will specify how often these reports must be submitted. Applicants should be aware of the post award reporting requirements reflected in [2 CFR 200 Appendix XII—Award Term and Condition for Recipient Integrity and Performance Matters](#).
4. **Foreign Assistance Data Review:** As required by Congress, the Department of State must make progress in its efforts to improve tracking and reporting of foreign assistance data through the Foreign Assistance Data Review (FADR). The FADR requires tracking of foreign assistance activity data from budgeting, planning, and allocation through obligation and disbursement. Successful applicants will be required to report and draw down federal funding based on the appropriate FADR Data Elements, indicated within their award documentation. In cases of more than one FADR Data Element, typically program or sector and/or regions or country, the successful applicant will be required to maintain separate accounting records.

**G. FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACTS:** If you have any questions about the grant application process, please contact PD at: [KinshasaPDGrants@state.gov](mailto:KinshasaPDGrants@state.gov). Note: We do not provide pre-consultation for application-related questions that are addressed in the Notice of Funding Opportunity. Once an application has been submitted, U.S. Embassy Kinshasa staff may not discuss this competition with applicants until the entire proposal review process is completed.

## H. OTHER INFORMATION: Guidelines for Budget Justification

- **Personnel:** Describe the wages, salaries, and benefits of temporary or permanent staff who will be working directly for the applicant on the program, and the percentage of their time that will be spent on the program.
- **Travel:** Estimate the costs of travel and per diem for this program. If the program involves international travel, include a brief statement of justification for that travel.
- **Equipment:** Describe any machinery, furniture, or other personal property that is required for the program, which has a useful life of more than one year (or a life longer than the duration of the program), and costs at least \$5,000 per unit.
- **Supplies:** List and describe all the items and materials, including any computer devices, that are needed for the program. If an item costs more than \$5,000 per unit, then put it in the budget under Equipment.
- **Contractual:** Describe goods and services that the applicant plans to acquire through a contract with a vendor. Also describe any sub-awards to non-profit partners that will help carry out the program activities.
- **Other Direct Costs:** Describe other costs directly associated with the program, which do not fit in the other categories. For example, shipping costs for materials and equipment or applicable taxes. All "Other" or "Miscellaneous" expenses must be itemized and explained.
- **Indirect Costs:** These are costs that cannot be linked directly to the program activities, such as overhead costs needed to help keep the organization operating. If your organization has a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate (NICRA) and includes NICRA charges in the budget, attach a copy of your latest NICRA. Organizations that have never had a NICRA may request indirect costs of 10% of the modified total direct costs as defined in 2 CFR 200.68.
- **Cost Share:** "Cost sharing" refers to contributions from the organization or other entities other than the U.S. Embassy. It also includes in-kind contributions such as volunteers' time and donated venues.
- **Alcoholic Beverages:** Award funds cannot be used for alcoholic beverages.